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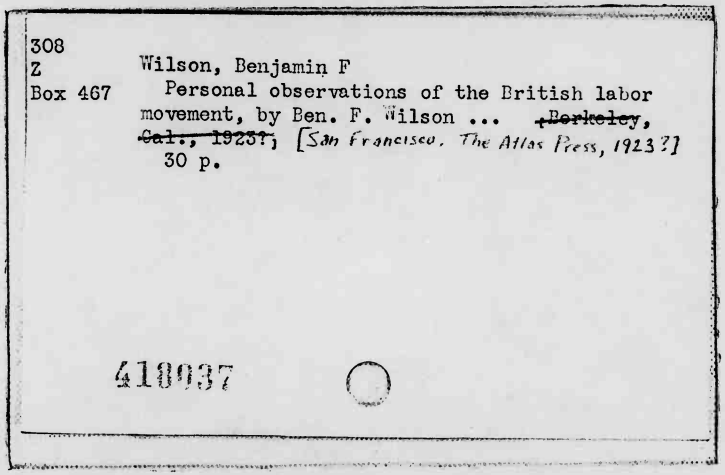
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Personal Observations *of the* British Labor Movement

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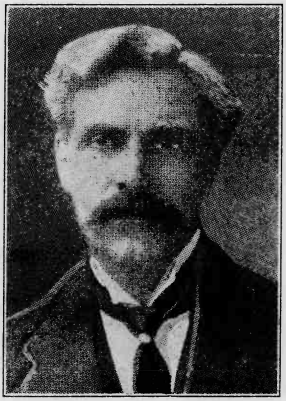
By BEN. F. WILSON



MR. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M. P.
Leader of the Labor Party in the House of Commons

PRICE 15 CENTS

NOTE:—Extra copies of this pamphlet my he obtained by addressing the author at Berkeley, California.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON
June 18th, 1923.

To All Whom It May Concern:

I have great pleasure in stating that Ben F. Wilson arrived here just before the recent General Election and that he rendered great services to the Labor Party whilst the fight was on. Afterwards he took many meetings in South Wales and in other parts of England, and has been of great propaganda help to us. In the course of his visit he has come into the most intimate contact with our Movement and its personalities, and no man is better equipped for interpreting us to an American public.

J. RAMSAY MacDONALD.

Foreword

Fifteen years ago I went to Great Britain as an interested student of industrial and political affairs. I was immediately pressed into service and spoke for the various Labor groups. I remained two years lecturing throughout England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. I was tremendously impressed with their Labor movement and greatly enjoyed my association with these "Soldiers of the Common Good."

After my return to America I kept in close touch with the movement both thru the British Labor press and correspondence with many of its prominent leaders, as well as a host of other interested friends. I received during the interval many pressing invitations to return; however, my other work in America prevented my accepting, but when I saw the last general election approaching, I felt the urge so strongly that I immediately decided to cross the Atlantic to assist. I cabled to my British friends, informing them I was en route and would arrive twelve days later.

After a stormy passage our steamship "Olympic" arrived at Southampton on scheduled time. I received a telegram of cordial greeting upon arrival and was instructed to proceed at once to Cardiff, South Wales. Here Mr. J. Mardy Jones, M. P., met me at noon the following day and I was immediately whisked by auto into various towns to address the assembled crowds. I spoke at five mass meetings that afternoon and night, and my program was even more strenuous during the remaining days until the election was over. I was then drafted to remain and continue my lecture work. The enthusiasm continued and my audiences were large and inspiring. I remained until June 16th, when I took ship for New York after having addressed over two hundred and fifty meetings.

Since my return to California I have addressed various labor and farm organizations and church

bodies telling my story of British Labor. It was cordially received and I was urged by many to put it in print. This is the result. The story is not by any means complete, but I hope that this fragmentary presentation in convenient form may prove acceptable to many people in America who are interested in this significant political awakening and who have not the time to read the extensive literature now published on the subject.

The last election in Great Britain not only witnessed the greatest Labor triumph in British history, but undoubtedly was the most significant political victory yet achieved by labor anywhere in the world. I therefore send forth this written word for distribution in America with the greetings of the British workers to their American brothers.

BEN. F. WILSON.

513 San Fernando Avenue,
Berkeley, Calif.

Introductory

The age in which we live is one of honest doubt, also of keen investigation and repudiation of things worn out. There is an increasing demand for the efficient, the progressive, the up-to-date. This is largely due to the progress made in physical science of recent years. We are literally living in a new world to that in which our fathers lived. The thinker and the scientist have thought and delved to perfect man's control over nature's forces until today man's power has become almost miraculous. As a result science has given us a new world. We have a new sky above us because of astronomy revealing to us an infinite universe in space. We have a new earth beneath our feet because geology has made it an Eternal Universe in time. We have a new conception of life because of what biology has revealed. Psychology is giving us a deeper conception of the self, and, thanks to sociology, our ideas of human relations are being revised. We therefore conclude there is no darkness but ignorance, there is no light but knowledge, there is no progress but thru the application of truth—truth to the individual, to the nation, to the world.

The late great war has torn the mask off civilization and its institutions and forced us into more serious thinking. Practically all of the foundations of our civilization have been disturbed. Moreover, these supposed foundations failed to meet our expectations. Every institution has been weighed in the balance and has been found wanting. Political and religious institutions were equally unable to stand the shock and have come out of the great crisis bearing evidence of their inadequacy. Civilization itself rocked on its base, tottered, and almost collapsed. The slaughtered dead of our young men—the flower of the world—now sleeping in silent dust were so great in number that if we could summom them forth again and they should march before our door four

abreast it would require three long months for them to pass. Today, now that the war is over and peace declared the problems of peace are scarcely less grave than those of war.

The Long Struggle for Democracy

World progress has been slow and painful. The old always resists the new. Jesus found it so and declared, "You cannot put new wine into old bottles"—you cannot put new life into old institutions. Every forward step of freedom has been achieved only after hard toil and much suffering on the part of a few daring souls possessed of leadership. The great masses have been blinded in ignorance and steeped in superstition. It is only within the last few hundred years that any marked thinking has been done by the masses. Even as late as 1840 in Great Britain 40 per cent of the men and 65 per cent of the women could neither read nor write, and in our America at the time of the Revolutionary War only one in twelve could read or write. For long, long ages of history, progress was impossible because of the density of human ignorance. Our fathers battled for centuries before they achieved religious freedom and for at least one hundred and fifty years thereafter the struggle for political freedom was waged.

The United States is perhaps the oldest Democracy of the world. It can almost be truthfully stated that Great Britain did not become a Democracy until 1917. Up to that time the majority of the male citizens and all of the female citizens had no voice whatever in governmental affairs. Up to 1832 only 3 per cent could vote and every attempt to extend this almost precipitated a civil war. In Gladstone's day only 16 per cent were voters and this was extended by a comparatively small addition until the Great War revealed the utter insanity and criminal injustice of this procedure.

In 1914 war was declared by a Parliament in Great Britain representing only one-sixth of the population. Millions of young men buckled on the uniform and went forth to war—risking their lives for

a policy they did not fashion. Nor had they a voice in choosing the representatives in Parliament. Millions of women who suffered worse than death in being called upon to give up their sons to defend their country, had no voice whatever in declaring war or later in shaping the peace policy. They and their noble sons were led as sheep to the slaughter and were, like sheep, dumb in the presence of the call of their war lords.

In every nation in Europe a similar and in many respects a worse condition prevailed. You can call the roll and the voice of Democracy was not yet articulate. Neither could the great mass speak for themselves. Russia, Austria, Germany and other nations were alike in this respect. It was only after the horrors of the late war that 350,000,000 people of Europe had their despotic rulers lifted off their backs and for the first time in history the word "democracy" was uttered, though falteringly, by the great masses in Europe. They have made many mistakes and like children are creeping before they can walk along the new pathway of Democracy with self-directed stride and intelligent vision. Russia, rubbing her darkened eyes, after long centuries of despotism in which her children had suffered the bitter pains of cruel bondage, deprived of practically all political privilege and bereft of rights, arose at last and although she walks with unsteady tread and has not yet learned all the arts of self-government, yet in the light of the cruel degradation from which she escaped, has probably after all made marvelous progress.

Germany, despite her progress in popular education and scientific development, had withheld from her women and mothers the right of franchise. This, the new Republic corrected and gave to the German woman her first vote with the result that today twenty women members sit in the Reichstag. And despite the fact that three hundred and fifty-four murders of labor leaders and other men of prominence have been committed by the reactionary parties to stem the tide of Democracy and discredit

and weaken the new Republic, we see unmistakable signs of progress.

The Social Problem

It has taken the race hundreds of years to produce any real conscience in political affairs. We are just now beginning to have a conscience—a sense of right industrially. We stand today on the threshhold of a New Era. The moment is propitious for the birth of a social consciousness—a new national consciousness—a new international consciousness. The seat of power is shifting from the propertied classes to the producing masses. The Labor Problem is now for the first time in human history forcing the attention of the awakened and intelligent working classes and is also summoning the enthusiastic co-operation of the public spirited citizen.

The British Labor Movement

In Great Britain the world is witnessing today what may be regarded as the greatest and most significant evidence of a new birth of democracy. The year 1922 will, in Great Britain, long mark the beginning of a great historic epoch. By the victory of last year the time arrived when the dumb majesty of misery found a voice with no quavering and uncertain note—when they elected 142 members to the British House of Commons.

This sweeping political victory was no mere accident. Like all great events it was preceeded by long years of faithful and heroic work of brave and conscientious advocates of the new order. They were at times regarded as "voices crying in the wilderness" —they were the despised Nazarenes of Britain's New Life! Their work was arduous and at times uninspiring. They were by the very nature of things regarded by the defenders of the old order as "destructive iconoclasts," "disturbers of the peace," for like unto the Carpenter of Nazereth they "stirred up the people."

A vigorous campaign had been waged by the Labor Party for long years. Thousands upon thousands of leaflets of Labor literature had been printed and distributed; a well organized lecture course had been perfected; hundreds of meetings were conducted throughout the country, reaching into the remotest corner even of the agricultural areas as well as thoroughly permeating the mining and manufacturing districts, also into the black (crockery) country where men, women and children toiled for a miserable wage. The message of social uplift was presented by able and informed platform men and women, many of whom secured their education through the combined efforts of their Union brothers who had saved their pennies out of their meager wages and donated to a fund known as

the Educational Fund to educate and train those whom they selected to voice their gospel of labor.

Meetings and Methods

"It is not unusual therefore for the Labor Party to conduct a thousand meetings on Sunday, from John O'Groats to Land's End. These are frequently attended by 500 to 10,000 willing listeners. Great open air demonstrations, especially during the summer months, are conducted in every large industrial area. In addition to these Sunday meetings a systematic series of week night meetings are held. The country is divided into areas and each area has a capable secretary who carefully routes his propaganda speakers and lecturers. When the speaker closes his work in one district, he is transferred to another, until the whole country is covered and thousands of people hear the story of labor's aspirations and its program.

The meetings frequently take on a revival tone. Labor songs, up to date, full of what an American would term "pep," are sung with gusto. Frequently these song services continue a full half hour before the speaker is introduced and "tune up" the meeting. Everybody joins in the singing. Many of the local groups have a Labor Party Choir and a Labor Party Band which add a stimulating factor to their successful propaganda. It is not unusual to see great demonstrations organized with a brass band leading off while thousand follow in rank formation, each division under its captain. Appropriate banners are carried, upon which are inscribed "Vote Labor," "Who Pays the War Debt?", "Labor Will Provide **Homes,** Not Hovels, for the Workers," "**Nationalize** the Coal Industry to Prevent the Mine Owners from Paralizing the Miners," "Come! Hear Labor's Program!", "Must the Workers Foot the Bill?", "Join the Labor Party and End War," "Hands Off Russia," "Labor pleads the just cause of the ex-service man," "Fit for Service, Fit for Pension," "No ex-Service Paupers," "Levy on Luxury or Levy on Life, Which Do You Want?", "Labor Defends the Children's

Birthright," "Labor Keeps Its Promises," "The Labor Party stands for the welfare of mothers and babies," "Labor Demands Mothers' Pensions," "France and the Ruhr Protest Rally," "Fall in!"

These and many other banners of a similar nature are carried by the marchers, practically everybody turns out, the halls are frequently jammed to the roof, overflow meetings are held; great open air meetings crowd the city parks, the very atmosphere is electrical, a genuine revival spirit prevails, good fellowship, good spirits, good hopes, good cheer abound.

Labor Ready for Action

No wonder therefore when the late campaign was launched and the date of election set Labor regarded it as an opportunity to put into practice the gospel which previously inspired their soul. Labor was ready! His mind was made up. He was mentally and spiritually anchored to the world's new political faith. He was not waiting for a Moses. He was already on the march! He wasted no time vainly discussing plans by which he might "reward his friends and punish his enemies"—not did he wait to see who the Liberal and Conservative Party candidate might be and then choose the "best man," and yield his support. Labor had made its decision long months—sometimes years before—even to the selection of a Parliamentary candidate whom everybody knew as such. All that was necessary was to fill in the legal forms. Then he went forth with proud and dignified step into the heart of the campaign, armed with the weapons of an awakened mind and liberated spirit, and with David-like conviction challenged to open combat the Goliaths of Landlordism, reaction, conservatism and special privilege. Many of these were routed even before the date of final contest. Labor therefore went to the polls and cast his ballot for his **own** candidate on his own party ticket. He had builded it himself. **It was his—He was it.** He had financed it out of his meagre weekly wage. He was part of it. It was part of him.

Labor Statesmanship

The early pioneers of the Labor Party realized they must do three things: win recognition as a separate political entity, establish the party as one of the distinct political forces of national life; and, when they grew stronger, make serious attempts to capture the reigns of government. In other words: carry on an educational propaganda, create a political party distinct and independent, then later pass from the realm of agitation into the realm of constructive statesmanship. This they have accomplished and today, with their 145 members in Parliament and an efficient organization under capable leadership in the field, backed by a voting membership of nearly five million strong, are now seriously tackling the present great social and industrial problems that painfully disturb Great Britain and seriously menace civilization.

They are rewriting history. They are making a new history. They represent a new idea in politics. They embody a new spirit. They have a constructive working program. They are doing the deed, definitely relating themselves to present issues and at the same time keeping before them the ultimate goal of a new order. They are mending wherever possible and will end as soon as possible.

The fact that they are seriously and intelligently facing great human interests imparts to them a dynamic energy and inspiration which the parties of the established order cannot employ. It is conceded even by their enemies that the Labor Party is destined in the near future to take over the Government. It is today challenging both Liberal and Conservative party alike. The old parties are prisoners of their party tradition, content to live on their name and past reputations. The Labor Party is confounding the old party politicians and shaming them for their allegiance to the dead past—while the living present is rotten ripe for change and the great mass suffer unspeakable agony in poverty, unemployment and low wages.

Four Elements of Power

In addition to their methods, which are largely responsible for their recent political victory, they have previously developed four great factors which were the base and groundwork upon which they are today successfully building their political structure.

To these I shall briefly refer, altho a full chapter might easily be written on each one of them. I refer to their **Industrial** or trade union organization, their marvelous **Co-operative** society, their **Labor Press,** and their **Labor Party Organization;** linking them all together in a unified group.

A word about each of these is in order.

Labor Unions

The British worker must be congratulated upon his industrial organization. The miners are now almost 100 per cent organized; the dockers have a powerful union; the railwaymen and the steel and tin plate men are solidly organized; quite recently the agricultural workers, who previously had little or no interest, have built a magnificent organization and are operating under efficient leadership. The long, long hours of the agricultural worker are now reduced to forty-eight hours a week in winter and fifty hours a week in summer. This and other concessions won by the agricultural worker has greatly stimulated his interest and appreciation of the principle of organization and will undoubtedly be a mighty factor in solidly cementing this hitherto reactionary group into the Labor Party. When this is accomplished the Labor Party will be the Government of Great Britain. Whoever wins the rural districts in the next election will win the government.

In addition to the previously mentioned trade and labor unions it is interesting to note the national union of school teachers has a membership of 102,000. The president last year was Mr. Cove of Ton Pentre, South Wales, a member of the Labor Party, with whom I had the great pleasure of sharing "platform thrills" during the campaign.

The Post Office workers have 90,000 in their organization; the clerks have 53,000; the newsboys are organized; the policemen are organized, its national organizer being recently elected to Parliament from Liverpool as a Labor candidate; the unemployed are organized.

The Co-operative Society

The co-operative society is successfully operating and growing in membership faster than population. Almost one-half of the families of Great Britain are enrolled in this society. They have about 1,500 groups successfully operating in the Kingdom and each month adds to this list. Last year they supplied in goods to their members over £334,000,000 (about $1,700,000,000), thus directly saving an enormous amount of money for their members—and indirectly preventing excessive profiteering, as it is impossible for the general merchant class to sell their wares at prices higher than those of the co-operative society.

As an example of the efficiency of the co-operative society the following might be cited. During the war, before our United States Government restricted the flour operatives from excessive profiteering, Minneapolis flour was shipped to England and after all freight and other expenses were paid the flour was sold by the co-operative society in Great Britain for $8.50 a barrel. It may be interesting and illuminating to know that in America, where the co-operative movement has not yet developed to a working basis, we paid $17.00 a barrel for this same quality of flour produced in this same Minneapolis mill. The difference is what we pay for our lack of organization. The surplus is paid the flour trust for its organization.

Labor Press

Labor also has a well organized and equipped press under capable and intelligent editorship. "The Daily Herald" (12 pages); "The New Leader" (weekly), London; "The Forward" (weekly), Glasgow; "The Socialist Review" (monthly); "The Labor Review" (monthly); all have an extensive circulation and give great and valuable publicity to every important issue raised in or out of Parliament as well as doing an immense service, particularly at campaign periods. Facts are keenly presented and the whole political situation discussed, including the candidate, in a way intelligently to inform and inspire the workers.

In addition to these papers, thousands—one might truthfully say millions—of one-page leaflets are printed, distributed and circulated systematically by the efficient national and local organization.

Labor Unity

Thus we see with the strong organization of the trade unions, the co-operative society and the well equipped press, they have a trinity of factors which well night makes them invincible. They have, however, still another factor—a cohesive organization of all combined which, like a chain, links them together in the common fight at the ballot box under the banner of the Labor Party.

The Independent Labor Party, which is composed of the more radical elements, confer with the Labor Party committees which comprise, more strictly speaking, the trade union groups. Joint conferences are held and candidates mutually agreed upon. In some districts a Labor Party candidate is selected, while in others an Independent Labor Party member is chosen, while in still others, as at the last election, co-operative candidates are nominated. Then the combination goes forth with a united front to attack their opponents.

It frequently occurs that the old parties form a coalition, and nominate only one candidate, a Liberal or Conservative, thus hoping thru their combination to defeat Labor. In one of the districts in which I spoke during the campaign a Liberal candidate was selected and the Conservative Party agreed to work for him to defeat the Labor man, while in an immediately adjoining constituency the Liberals agreed to surrender their nominee and support a Conservative candidate. At the same time in another district di-

rectly touching the two mentioned, all three parties made their nominations. The election resulted in a Labor victory in the entire area. One Labor candidate secured a majority of over 3,000, a second over 4,000, while a third had over 7,000 majority, notwithstanding the fact that the Conservative candidate ran as a Labor Conservative, and was smashingly defeated. It is doubtful if ever again either of the old parties can secure a candidate to consent to run in this area. The defeat is humiliating, especially to a large employer of labor, or to a lawyer, since no working man or trade union man could be induced to accept the nomination, knowing it meant a nerve racking campaign and an overwhelming defeat at the polls.

Attitude of the Church

I wish I might add a fifth factor, namely, the Church, as a contributing force toward Labor's victory. This I regret cannot be done, apart from the Society of Friends. Both the Established Church and Non-Conformist Churches cannot be said to have rendered any worth while assistance to this great movement which the British Labor Party has recently achieved. Now since the party has its 145 representatives elected to Parliament some of the clergy, especially the younger element, are developing a "social consciousness," but they are not regarded as factors of any great importance owing to their late arrival. The Church of Great Britain has lost the respect of the great masses, from which it will not soon, if ever, recover.

I recall a session of the National Conference of the Labor Party at Edinburgh which I attended fifteen years ago. The venerable Keir Hardie was in the chair. Rev. R. J. Campbell of the City Temple, London, who at that time manifested some interest in the Labor movement and had recently joined the party, was introduced to speak. During the course of his remarks he stated that in his opinion the Labor Party needed a spiritual dynamic and if he could render any service to that end he would be happy. At the con-

clusion of his remarks Keir Hardie arose and said: "I quite agree with Mr. Campbell that the Labor Movement needs a spiritual dynamic. However, I would like to remind him that the Labor Movement is not alone in that need. The church herself is in similar if not greater need and therefore can render us little assistance in that she has not enough spiritual dynamic for herself."

The indifferent attitude on the part of the church is even more inexcusable when one considers the unspeakable conditions prevailing. The story of unemployment, poverty, bad housing and starvation are sufficient to leave scars on any soul. Labor cried for bread and was given a stone by its spiritual advisers. The recent pronouncements of the United Churches of Christ in America against the Steel Trust, child labor and other serious violations in industry make inspiring reading and reveal the fact that in America the church is today redeeming herself from past indifference to social problems.

Appalling Social Conditions

Here are a few cold and uninspiring facts of conditions prevailing in Great Britain: 99 per cent of the people are landless; 2,500 own more than half of all the land; the House of Lords own one-third of all the land; twelve families of Scotland own one-quarter of all the land of Scotland; 88 per cent of the wealth of Great Britain is owned by 2½ per cent of its people. Nearly $50,000,000,000 was spent by Great Britain during the Great War, yet not one thousandth part of that sum was expended on social welfare of her people from the beginning of her history up to 1919! Nearly $500,000,000 was spent last year for its workless, not providing employment, but keeping them alive; one million three hundred thousand are unemployed; five out of six who die don't leave a penny behind them, hence make no will.

These grave conditions, some people would imagine, would naturally force political and economic change. This is not always true. The slums of every great city are the bulwarks of conservatism and re-

action. Those who fester in extreme poverty and those who revel in unearned wealth are frequently as one in their defense of the present system. Progress is not always born with mere discontent with existing conditions unless enlightened by vision of something better and a belief in its attainment. Labor has more to gain from knowledge than blind discontent. The most encouraging sign in Great Britain is that Labor stands for progress in education. This is the best guarantee of its fitness to govern.

Labor Awoke

Enlightened labor not only saw the enslavement of men, the degradation of women and the damnation of childhood, and other intolerable social conditions —all these burned into their very souls—but they rose up and cursed them. Moreover, they saw the affairs of the nation in the hands of old men and in the grip of old institutions, old and effete parties, hoary with age, old programs, old policies, and they determined to put young blood and new life into national affairs. This, they are doing with marvelous energy and efficiency.

Let me now speak of the principles, program, and personnel of the Labor Party.

Principles

What is their outlook? What are their convictions? Where are their sympathies? If these are right, a right and just program will inevitably follow.

The Labor Party believes that every human being has the absolute right to have access to those resources of wealth production from which he can secure or produce those things which make for physical, mental and moral development and expression. This is their dynamic energy. This is the fount from which they secure their inspiration.

Edwin Markham, our beloved American poet, expressed what might be termed the principle of the present Labor Party of Great Britain when, in an address at the Panama Exposition, he declared: "In that great day of God that is sure to come, we will

no longer use man to make money, we will use money to make man." To this, may be added the following from the election manifesto of H. G. Wells, the noted English writer, who was a Labor Party candidate during the last campaign.

Calls Labor "Creator"

"To-day the Labor Party stands for all creative work in the state—from the work of the field laborer to the work of the doctor, journalist, teacher, minister, works manager and scientific investigator; and its policy is a policy of steady, watchful, generous, comprehensive, scientific reorganization, amid the strained, shattered, wasteful, life-destroying confusion in which we live to-day.

"It is not necessarily antagonistic to the interests and claims of property honestly administered for production and general welfare, but it is set steadfastly and systematically against all unproductive and parasitic property, and against merely acquisitive business enterprises. Political, financial and business activities, for private gain at public expense, it seeks to prevent and expose and end.

For Scientific Control

"Scientific methods in business and production, systematic progress in health and education, pitted against the methods of adventure and scramble—that is what the advent of the Labor Party means to-day."

Program

They have a far-reaching program as follows:

Reorganization of the social and economic system.
More equitable distribution of wealth.
Nationalization of mines and railways.
A national housing scheme.
Pensions for widowed mothers.
Reorganization of agriculture so landlords will be compelled to sacrifice rents, rather than force farm workers to accept starvation wages.
Creation of a war debt redemption fund through graduated levies on fortunes exceeding $25,000.

Restitution of large war profits.
Increased death duties on large estates.
Income tax exemptions for incomes below $1,250 and reduction of income taxes on incomes under $2,500.
Revision of the peace treaties.
Reduction of reparations.
General disarmament.
Real independence for Egypt.
Self-government for India.

This platform, the Labor Party declares, is "neither Bolshevism, nor communism, but **only common sense and justice—labor's alternative to reaction and revolution.**"

Purpose or Object

Their purpose is to change the public opinion of Great Britain, not by revolutionary tactics, but by appealing to the intelligence of the people and by rallying them to the ballot box in support of their program. They offer them no quick change policy. There is none. They realize they must educate the people. The chief objects of the party as laid down in their constitution are:

"To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, and the best obtainable system of popular administration of each industry or service.

"Generally, to promote the political, social and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions, by hand or by brain, for the means of life."

The method which it seeks to employ to bring this to pass is by a process of "gradualism" as stated by Sidney Webb, M. P., at the opening of the Labor Party Conference in London last June. The inspiration of the Labor Movement, Webb continued, was "derived not from Karl Marx and his doctrine of the class war, but from Robert Owen and the gospel of universal brotherhood." As if still more to emphasize

the breach with revolution, the first act of the conference was to refuse by an overwhelming vote the application of the local Communist Party for affiliation.

The Labor Party is now a Parliamentary party. Its first duty is to see that the bottom dog gets a better share of the national prosperity than he used to do, and, as this party conference goes to show, there is little likelihood that in doing so it will lose sight of the higher interests of the Nation of which it is a part, or recklessly press through wild schemes of economic reform.

This recent conference declared: **"We do not, of course, pretend that it is possible, even after the drastic clearing away that is now going on, to build society anew in a year or two of feverish 'Reconstruction.' What the Labor Party intends to satisfy itself about is that each brick that it helps to lay shall go to erect the structure that it intends, and no other.**

"What we now promulgate as our policy, whether for opposition or for office, **is not merely this or that specific reform,** but **a deliberately thought out, systematic, and comprehensive plan for that immediate social rebuilding which any Ministry, whether or not it desires to grapple with the problem, will be driven to undertake."**

More Light—But Also More Warmth!

"The Labor Party is far from assuming that it possesses a key to open all locks; or that any policy which it can formulate will solve all the problems that beset us. But we deem it important to ourselves as well as to those who may, on the one hand, wish to join the Party, or, on the other, to take up arms against it, to make quite clear and definite our aim and purpose. The Labor Party wants that aim and purpose, as set forth in the preceding pages, with all its might. It calls for more warmth in politics, for much less apathetic acquiescence in the miseries that exist, for none of the cynicism that saps the life of leisure. On the other hand, the Labor Party has no belief in any of the problems of the world being

solved by Good Will alone. Good Will without knowledge is Warmth without Light. Especially in all the complexities of politics, in the still undeveloped Science of Society, the Labor Party stands for increased study, for the scientific investigation of each succeeding problem, for the deliberate organization of research, and for a much more rapid dissemination among the whole people of all the science that exists. And it is perhaps specially the Labor Party that has the duty of placing this Advancement of Science in the forefront of its political program.

"What the Labor Party stands for in all fields of life is, essentially, Democratic Co-operation; and Co-operation involves a common purpose which can be agreed to; a common plan which can be explained and discussed, and such a measure of success in the adaptation of means to ends as will ensure a common satisfaction. An autocratic Sultan may govern without science if his whim is law. A Plutocratic Party may choose to ignore science, if it is heedless whether its pretented solutions of social problems that may win political triumphs ultimately succeed or fail. But no Labor Party can hope to maintain its position unless its proposals are, in fact, the outcome of the best Political Science of its time; or to fulfil its purpose unless that science is continually wresting new fields from human ignorance."

"Hence, although the Purpose of the Labor Party must, by the law of its being, remain for all time unchanged, its Policy and its Program will, we hope, undergo a perpetual development, as knowledge grows, and as new phases of the social problem present themselves, in a continually finer adjustment of our measures to our ends. If Law is the Mother of Freedom, Science, to the Labor Party, must be the Parent of Law."

Doing the Deed

And may I say they are constructively working to that end. I have seen them at close range. I have attended mass meetings and spoken from the same platform with a large number of Labor Members of

Parliament in the various parliamentary constituencies. I have sat as a silent and appreciative listener in the gallery of the House of Commons and have seen the one hundred and forty-five Labor members in full action at the memorable opening of Parliament in November—regarded by many as the most historic session since the days of Cromwell. Never shall I forget Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the official Opposition to His Majesty's Government, as he arose from his front bench seat as the leader of the Labor Party! I had known MacDonald for years by reputation. I had also the great pleasure of recent intimate association with him at quiet evening gatherings in a hospitable home in Rhiwbina, near Cardiff, where at week-ends we assembled ourselves and chatted and laughed and sang songs until a late hour. His genial spirit, his genuine human heart, his bigness of soul, his typical Scotch witicisms, his fellowship warmed my heart. But all this revealed another MacDonald—the relaxed, social, happy, jovial play-mate, forgetting the world-storm that so heavily beat against his great manly heart. I saw him now in action, in service, as leader of his party hurling defiance to his political opponents, yet with a dignity and power that revealed him as one of the greatest single forces in the House. His tall, slender, straight form; his voice with a delightful Scotch accent; his light grey hair; his pleasing personality, with idealism written full upon his countenance, thrilled me with admiration and delight. He arose and, after his well chosen words of introduction, reading from the King's Speech:

"The ameliorative measures prepared by My late Government are being examined afresh."

We are not interest in

"the ameliorative measures prepared by My late Government," said Mr. MacDonald.

"We are interested in the blunders of the late Government, which created the conditions out of which the unemployment arises. Our interests are concerned not with the ameliorative measures that

the late Government prepared. Who cares in the least about them? After all these ameliorative measures have been brought in, after all the millions of pounds that have been spent upon them, your streets to-day witness processions of unemployed, and your official records show that 1,300,000 people are still requiring those ameliorative measures."

"The party for which I speak has been represented in some extraordinary lights, especially during the election which has just finished. I admit, indeed I use a stronger word than admit, I glory in the fact, that we are not out for mere patching and tinkering here and there. We recognize, for instance, that behind the scenes at Lausanne the hidden hand is busy and is very powerful—the hidden hand of the oil interests. The same regarding Russia. Only the other day we saw it openly confessed in the newspapers that one country had come to an agreement with Bulgaria upon a certain policy because its national contractors were to be allowed to build a very important harbor. What is the use of closing our eyes to these facts? These economic interests are rarely disclosed. Nevertheless, there they are, in every lobby, in every hotel, pulling every wire they can lay their hand upon, for the purpose of using national interests in their own behalf."

Then in conclusion he turned to the Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, and added: "We cannot promise the right honorable gentleman tranquility. I am sure he does not expect it. We shall do our best to serve this house. We shall do our best to state our case in home affairs, in all their great perplexity, and in foreign affairs in their still greater perplexity; and I ask from you—and I know I will get it—and I ask from the Right Hon. Gentleman and his followers on the other side of the House that fair play, that generosity of treatment, which no man doing his best has ever been denied by this house." Then on that memorable opening day of Parliament there followed the hot debate from two o'clock in the afternoon until midnight, each Labor member proving his right to press for constructive legislation to heal the

wounds from which Great Britain bleeds. I confess I was inspired with the statesmanlike method with which these Britishers are translating new public opinion, conviction, knowledge and science into definite legislation thru constructive parliamentary action.

Progress

The Labor Party scored a great victory at the polls in November. They probably achieved the greatest victory since the rise of Democratic Government—certainly this is true as far as Great Britain is concerned. They have made a steady gain in their development almost since the beginning of their political activity thirty years ago.

In 1892 they elected 15 members to Parliament.
In 1895 they elected 12 members to Parliament.
In 1900 they elected 11 members to Parliament.
In 1906 they elected 52 members to Parliament.
In 1910 they elected 40 members to Parliament.
In 1918 they elected 62 members to Parliament.
In 1922-23 they elected 145 members to Parliament.

Still Gaining

For every five votes cast in the last general election for the Conservative Party, the Labor Party polled four. If the Tory vote were reduced 22 per cent it would fall befow the Labor vote. In the Bye elections held this year the Tory vote was actually 21 per cent less than the general election vote. The Liberal Party is shattered by internal dissension, and its leaders are discredited. It was neither able to make its views felt effectively at the general election nor did it play a really substantial part in the Parliamentary proceedings which followed the political melee in November last. The Liberal Party cannot come back into power.

Labor Forging Ahead

The Labor Party is forging ahead by leaps and bounds. It is now the second party in number and is, therefore, the official opposition in parliament.

In addition to this, the membership and influence of the party in the provinces is steadily increasing. The leaders of both the old parties concede the Labor Party will capture the government at the next general election unless one of two things occurs in the meantime. Either those who want to preserve the present system must remedy the evils that arise from it, or the old parties must form a coalition—and even then it is doubtful if they could secure sufficient elected members of Parliament to hold the balance of power.

Enemy Confession

I heard one of the leading Liberal members of Parliament declare in a speech delivered the day before I left England: "Unless something better than the present government is offered the people a Labor government will rule our destinies at no distant date." And Mr. Churchill, after a silence of seven months since his memorable defeat at Dundee by Mr. E. D. Morel, Scotch Laborite, declared "He feared that within two years or possibly less the government might collapse and those who succeeded might find it impossible in the hostile atmosphere prevailing, to get their ministers elected and would then be forced to make a fresh appeal to the country. Then it might be said on every side: 'The coalition has been tried and was unpopular. The Tories have been tried and failed. The Liberals are still quarreling. Now is the chance for Labor. Let them have a chance'." And he continued: "Millions of voters would respond to that argument and without any political contest a Labor government might be installed in power and would have all the affairs of the country at their disposal for a number of years."

Constructive Pronouncements

It may be added that the constructive pronouncements Labor is making in Parliament on every great and important national and international issue are being received with appreciation by an increasing number of public spirited people who previously

had little regard for the Labor Party policy. The Labor Party's positions on the domestic issue of unemployment, the coal crisis, the housing question, and other questions of vital concern to the British people in this serious hour are increasing tremendously the popularity of Labor both within and without the House of Commons. The party is therefore facing the future with new confidence and faith in the inevitable triumph of their cause.

Personnel of the Labor Party

It is not possible within this space to refer by name even briefly to the various members who comprise the Parliamentary group. Neither can I write more than a word about the beloved J. Keir Hardie, who probably more than any other man was responsible for the building of this magnificent organization which is today a strong political force and which undoubtedly is destined at an early date to become the dominating political power of Great Britain.

Kier Hardie died of a broken heart immediately after the outbreak of the Great War. He did his utmost to bring about international understanding and was unwilling to believe the comrades whom he had greeted at the many international conventions could not be induced to rally together and rebuke the orders of the war lords. He died in the lonely trenches of duty at home, but his memory will ever inspire the movement he did so much to father, and upon which he indelibly stamped the rich spiritual imprint of his great personality. A grateful Labor movement of Great Britain will celebrate annually his birthday.

A full chapter could easily be written about each member. They are all unique characters, critical, alert and well informed. Many of them have specialized in most of the big subjects at issue. Most of them are men of first rate ability and many of them are regarded as authorities on the problems demanding Parliamentary, if not world attention. They are speakers with knowledge and ability. The leader

J. Ramsay MacDonald, Charles Rodden Buxton, Arthur Ponsonby, Charles Trevelyan, E. D. Morel (Editor "Foreign Affairs"), Colonel Wedgewood, these are all thoroughly informed in international affairs.

Mr. Philip Snowden is one of the ablest men on financial policy in Great Britain, and always a formidable critic. Mr. Sidney Webb is a man of encyclopaedic mind and an international authority on social problems. Mr. H. Lees Smith, once principal of Ruskin College, Oxford, now sits with seven of his students near him on the Labor benches of the House of Commons. Mr. William Leach of Bradford, Ben Riley of Huddersfield are both men of ability. Major Atlee, the professor of London College of Economics; Mr. F. W. Jowett, George Landsbury and many others have had long experience in administrative affairs.

Industrial problems are ably looked after by the miners' leaders and other prominent trade union members. Many of the Scotch members are school teachers, who have specialized in educational questions. Mr. James Maxton, Mr. Robert Nicol, Captain Hay and Mr. Tom Johnston are all graduates of Glasgow University and leaders of the education reform movement of Scotland. Mr. James C. Welsh is the sweet singing poet of the Highlands. Mr. L. MacNeill Weir was formerly a school teacher from the banks of Loch Lomond, also later an actor and writer of ability. He is contributing editor to "The Forward," of which Mr. Tom Johnston is the capable editor and director. Morgan Jones is also a school teacher of South Wales. He accuses me of being responsible for his being in Parliament. He informed me when I met him in London that I was the first man to urge him to enter public life. This was when I visited Great Britain fifteen years ago.

Strong Temperance Sentiment

Our Prohibition friends in America will be pleased to note that at the National Conference of the Independent Labor Party which I had the pleasure of

attending at Easter—a strong straight Prohibition resolution was almost carried—lacking but eleven votes. Thirty of the thirty-one Scotch members in Parliament are teetotallers. The imperative need of this legislation may be seen when one is informed that Great Britain's drink bill last year amounted to almost $2,000,000,000. Conservative and Liberal parties refuse to consider this problem at their conferences.

Solemn Declaration of Faith

The Scottish members held a dedication Sunday night before leaving on the Caledonia Express for London to take up their duties as members of the House of Commons. Over 50,000 jammed the streets and railway station before their train left, and sang labor songs and Scotch psalms. No wonder that since the election eleven of the largest theatres of Glasgow are packed every week-end when Labor meetings are held, addressed by their best speakers. The following report from the "Daily News," London, a Liberal paper, will be of interest:

"Labor M. P.s of Glasgow and the West of Scotland are not undertaking their duties light-heartedly. To-day at a special "dedication service" they pledged themselves to a solemn covenant which is to guide their future actions. The service was held in the St. Andrews and City Halls, and was attended by 8,000 people.

"In the words of the dedication, read by the chairman, it was stated that they had resolved to

dedicate themselves to the reconciliation and unity of the nations of the world and the development of the happiness of the people of these islands."

"They recorded their infinite gratitude to the pioneer minds of past generations who had opened up the path for the freedom of the people. They sent to all peoples a message of goodwill, reconciliation, and friendship."

"The men who suffered in the war should not be forgotten, and widows and orphans of those who fell should be cherished by the nation."

Homes for the People

"They promised they would urge without ceasing the need for providing houses for the people. They would endeavor to purge industry of the curse of unhealthy workshops, to restore wages to the level of adequate maintenance for a full life, and to eradicate the corrupting effects of monopoly and avarice."

"For those who were without work they would press for the provision of useful employment or reasonable maintenance."

Servants of the People

"They would abjure vanity and self-aggrandizement, recognizing that they were the honored servants of the people, and that their only righteous purpose was to promote the welfare of their fellow citizens and the well-being of mankind."

"Mr. Neil McLean (Govan) said he thought he could say, on behalf of the members returned, that they could accept in spirit and in letter the words of the dedication. The Labor movement was only just beginning; they were proceeding from talking to deeds."

"Mr. James Maxton said the new House would be the most strenuous that had ever sat at Westminster. Old Tories from the backwoods who never worked an hour a day in their lives would now earn £400 by the sweat of their brows."

Typical of the Group

The Scotch dedication may be said to express the spirit of the Parliamentary group. It reads like a chapter from Isaiah and reveals the serious attitude of mind and heart which move the Labor Party of Great Britain. It is indeed a new note in political life which inspires these noble "Soldiers of the Common Good."

For Bright and interesting Articles and News of the British Labor Movement, read:—

DAILY:

"The Daily Herald"

2 Carmelite Street, E. C. 4, LONDON

WEEKLY:

"The New Leader"

2 Carmelite Street, E. C. 4, LONDON

WEEKLY:

"The Glasgow Forward"

201 Buchanon Street, Glasgow, Scotland

MONTHLY:

"The Labor Review"

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MONTHLY:

"Foreign Affairs"

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